

Into The Dark by Undertheink16

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Summary: There he sat, alone, his back rigid at attention, facing away from her. The spark of hope ignited in her once more, had she found another person like her? And why is it that in the past 7 years of her coming here, she's only now meeting others like her? What changed? *Set end of/post S3.*

1. Into The Dark

Today was just like any other day, Mila Straight, a 16 year old girl from Indianapolis, Indiana, was simply checking on her Grandmother, Jewel. Though some would argue there was anything simple about Mila, she didn't think so at least. Her method of checking on her grandmother was an avenue that no one else could take, it was not a phone call or even a 2 hour drive to the 73 year old woman's home. No, she preferred to check on her through her mind-space. This was a space that only a few could use, in fact she thought she was the only one until a few weeks ago. She stumbled upon a small girl, with markings similar to her own on her wrist, and suddenly, Mila didn't feel so alone in the world anymore. She knew there were others, but she never thought she would get to meet them. This was a surprise Mila never expected, the young girl was just as surprised and said she would find Mila one day, in the near future. This was surprise enough, until today.

There he sat, alone, his back rigid at attention, facing away from her. The spark of hope ignited in her once more, had she found another person just like her? And why is it that in the past 7 years of her using this space, that she's only now meeting others like her? What changed?

She slowly approached, her bare feet causing ripples in the watery surface below. The man was still unmoving, sitting deadly still, like a statue on a disheveled bed. It looked out of place in this vast, black, empty space. As she rounded the foot of the bed, she could confirm he was indeed breathing; a controlled heaving was a better description.

His hair was curly blonde, with flecks of dirt and some green-blue fluid caked into the strands, it stood out against his naturally light complexion. His jaw was strong, and his nose was softly rounded at the tip, giving him a slightly boyish charm. But what stood out to Mila the most, were his eyes, they were blue gems of fear, set in fiery, swollen eyes. He didn't blink, he didn't even look towards her as she approached; He merely stared. His lips and nose were swollen as well, though Mila was unsure if it was due to crying or screaming, maybe both. His shirt was tattered and dirty. He looked, well, he

looked awful.

"Hey..." Mila spoke in her soft, questioning voice. No reply, he didn't even look toward her. "What are you doing here?" she pressed.

Nothing.

She was now standing next to him and placed a hand on his shoulder, he felt clammy. Gross.

"You look..." Mila paused, unsure how to approach this mystery man.

"Like shit?" He finally scoffed, his voice void of humor, his frame still motionless.

"I was going to say lost." she said as she sat next to him on the bed. "But yeah, do you look like shit." she flashed him her crooked smile and he finally looked at her, his eyes boring into hers, they told stories she couldn't interpret, sent a cry she couldn't hear.

"How are you here? Do you have a number too?" Mila pulled up her sleeve to show the man her wrist, the simple number 005 was etched into her skin.

"No." He strained. "Trapped." the word choked out of him as his body convulsed upright, like a tremor ran through him. Mila pressed a steady hand to his chest, in an attempt to stabilize him.

"I-Can't. I'm trapped." He breathed harshly, his eyes bulging and his teeth clenched with an audible snap.

"You're trapped? Here? That should be impossible." then it hit her. "Oh my god, you're normal. You're not an indigo child at all." Panic over took her suddenly, this man was a victim of some greater power that she could not see, smell or hear. He was trapped here, in the dream space, somewhere Mila had thought to be sacred, only accessible by people like her. Somehow he was trapped here.

"I don't know. I don't know!" the man wailed in fury.

"Hey." Mila leaned in, brushing the matted hair from his face and turning it to meet her own, she bore intently into his eyes and he

now seemed to be more confused than afraid. "You're gonna be fine. Ok?" She breathed in a low, hushed tone, one her mother used when she had a nightmare. She tried her best to assure him, in his defense this whole situation was terrifying.

"I don't know how." He said in what sounded like sarcasm through gritted teeth.

"Can I help you?" she asked. "I won't help you unless you give me permission."

"How can you help me? You're stuck here too." he spat.

"I'm not trapped here at all, I can go anywhere I want here. I use to check on my grandmother." She explained unnecessarily, though to her it sounded more like bragging.

"Then get me out!" he commanded.

"I can't just 'get you out' without properly understanding why you're here in the first place!" She shot back with equal bite.

"Fine. Do whatever you want." his shoulders finally loosened a little and seemed to slump in defeat. "Kill me if you have to, I don't care anymore." He paused and looked away from her, shameful. "After what I've done. You'd be doing me a favor."

Mila couldn't believe what she was hearing. This man with fire in his eyes to rival inferno, was giving up?

"Alright, but I will warn you, this doesn't feel good." She warned as she placed both hands on his face.

Her hands shook as she drew his face close to hers, his eyes filled with fear and anger. He naturally arched his chin towards her, like he was going to kiss her, but she drew his head down so that their foreheads touched, like two people sharing a secret.

"Just breath." She said softly.

"Ok." his voice broke, and he let out a breathy sigh, it smelled of stale cigarettes.

Mila took a breath, and pushed with her mind. This was always such an intimate exchange, more intimate than anything she could possibly imagine. She was about to see anything she wanted in his mind. From the look of the guy, she wasn't sure she wanted to. The intimacy of sharing thought was penetrating and an awe-full thing. Here he was unable to hide anything, no memory was safe, not conversation private. She felt like a robber. Stealing something that rightfully didn't belong to her.

Here Mila saw everything. The fear overwhelmed her. This poor man. He was alone and wanted to die alone. There was no hope, no peace and no love to be found anywhere. Destruction, hate, bitterness, burden and pain. The events of the past few months played out before her like a chord unraveling. She saw the black monster, dragging him to a living hell that he cannot escape from, causing him to harm others and himself. Distorting his body and mind. She saw the human monster, beating down any shred of hope he had. Stripping from him any joy he could have. She saw the projections towards others like a rabid dog devoid of emotion and joy. She saw the only speck of light in the dark cavern of his mind, somewhat forgotten. Here she knew she didn't belong. This was his only place of peace, he ran here when he couldn't sleep at night or when he couldn't take another hit. He ran here to see her face. Her beauty was unprecedented, she was his home.

The woman called out at the ocean crashed at her feet. "Billy!" she shouted. She was clouded, hidden away from him, the fear was at the forefront of his mind and this beast wanted it that way.

Billy. This was his name. It was almost as if this monster was trying to hide this from his as well.

Mila outstretched her hand to the blonde woman and she took it gingerly. They walked together through the dark. Mila brought the only beautiful thing to the front of his mind, and she hoped he let her stay.

Suddenly she felt a push, something was pushing her out. It hissed and stabbed at her conscience, Mila let out a cry of pain as she tried with every ounce of strength to keep hold of the woman. Black tendrils wrapped around her waist and pulled. Just as quickly as she had entered this man's mind, she was gone. Tears flowed from her

eyes freely and unashamed. She not only saw, but she felt. She felt everything. The shame, the fear, the willingness to die for peace.

"Billy." Mila said, looking into his eyes once more. She felt the blood trickling from her nostrils.

"Who are you?" He asked fearfully, he recoiled from her touch like she was a monster herself. Though it wasn't safe to tell him who she was, he already looked spooked, rightly so. She also didn't trust him, preservation was her primary goal in life. They had this in common.

"Let's just say, I'm the girl of your dreams." she felt a little melancholy, wiping the blood from her nose she got up from her place next to him.

The moment she turned, he faded away, and she was left alone.

2. Chapter 2 - New

A/N

My apologies for any errors, it is too late for me to edit coherently anymore and I'm too pumped to not share it. Please enjoy!

~B

July 10, 1985

"Name, please." the woman at the receiving desk of the hospital asked as Mila approached, vase of daisies in one hand, while clenching at the strap of her shoulder bag with the other. She had taken a cab straight from her house in Indianapolis, to the small town of Hawkins and hadn't had a chance to drop her bag anywhere. She didn't care though, she was here to see her Jewel.

After her encounter with the man in her dream space merely days ago, she discovered her Nana had suffered a stroke and had been admitted to Hawkins Memorial Hospital. She came as soon as her mother got her paycheck. Unfortunately, her mother was unable to join her right away, but she will be able to join her Friday, she only had to fend for herself for 2 days.

"Mila Straight, I'm here to see my grandmother, Jewel Petrov, she was admitted two days ago." she gave the woman behind the counter a steady smile, but the woman looked past her at the television on the wall. The news was on, apparently this town was victim to quite the tragedy. Apparently the local mall was destroyed and a lot of people either died or were hospitalized, the count is in the high 20's, now they're connecting it with missing persons around town. What a tragedy indeed.

"Mm." the woman exclaimed, "what a disaster..." she then turned to Mila with a face of disapproval. "What are you still doing here? Run along." she flicked her hand at Mila.

"Thanks." Mila responded and turned to leave, she almost rolled them hard enough to give herself a concussion. But she knew better, it was apparently rude to roll your eyes at people. Figures. "Oh! What floor?" she said turning on her heels to face the woman again.

"3!"

The hospital as it would seem, was under construction as well. But sure enough, on the third floor, there was her Nana's name next to room 306. She was awake when Mila entered the room and their reunion was long overdue, it had been six weeks since their last visit. School during the year and attempting to keep a part time job over the summer, Mila was unable to visit as much as her, or her Nana, would like.

Mila and Jewel discussed her health, apparently she was at home when she had her stroke and she was able to get an ambulance before it became worse. "You can always stay at my house, dear." Jewel said, "No granddaughter of mine is staying at a grungy, cheap hotel." she wrinkled her nose at the thought. After her Nana insisted for the fourth time that she stay at her house, Mila left her Nana's room with a kiss on her cheek, a warmer heart, and the keys to her Nana's house as well as the car.

As soon as Mila shut the door to her Nana's room, there was a spark. It went off like a match striking the box. The feeling was startling, almost like a moth to flame, she couldn't help but be drawn to it. In her mind, she felt the magnetic pull, to what, she didn't know. Not until she heard that name, "Billy"

She caught the eye of two redheaded women, an older woman and a younger girl, leaving a hospital room. The woman was crying and the young girl looked, burdened.

"It's all my fault." the young voice murmured in her thoughts.

What was her fault?

Mila usually made it a personal rule to never read anyone's mind without good reason, and this seemed like a pretty good reason, even though the chances of it being the same person was slim. There had

to be hundreds of people named Billy in the world. There's no way it could be the same guy from her dream space. That guy looked like he was in some deep shit, whoever he was, she wouldn't forget his face as long as she lived.

The woman nodded her head to Mila as she passed, and the small girl just looked onward, indifferent. Once they rounded the hallway to the stairwell, she took the first step toward the room they exited. The draw was so strong, her feet were almost moving on their own. Her stomach felt like it was anticipating a drop and her palms began to sweat. The magnet pulled her in and before she knew it, she was at the half open door.

There he was. Someone she had never met before, but she knew his face better than most. Mila's eyes widened and her lips slowly gaped in shock.

He was lying in a hospital bed, blankets tucked to his hips and bandages wrapped around the entirety of his waist, stitches in multiple places and was relying heavily on a respiratory system. Over all, he still looked like shit.

How? Mila thought, how could this happen? What are the odds, that this same man who she saw trapped in her Dream space, was here, fighting for his life in the same hospital as her Nana.

She approached slowly, the last thing she wanted was for him to wake up. As she approached, she noticed that he looked far more peaceful than the last time she saw him. His eye lashes stretched far over his cheek bones, and his facial hair was growing unkempt, compared to the first time she saw him, he didn't even look like the same person. Mila found herself wondering who he was and what he was like? He seemed like a real charmer, but maybe he was actually a band geek, loved math, and had perfect attendance. Maybe he was self-deprecating and didn't acknowledge that he was practically a perfect ten, or maybe he was a douche. The world was full of mystery.

Mila stretched out an unsteady hand and placed two long slender fingers on his forehead. She wasn't sure what she was looking for, maybe answers, maybe she's just nosy. Regardless of motive, she

pushed her mind forward, at first she didn't see anything, out of focus, like looking through a camera. Only certain things were clear, a car was smashed, he was looking at a group of children through the foggy window of a door, the red-headed girl was there, the look in her eyes was pained. She saw a monster, terrifying beyond anything she could have imagined, to her surprise, she saw herself. The memory of her leaning in, and telling him he was going to be fine. Finally, Mila saw him facing the young girl she saw in her dream space. El, that was her name. El placed a shaking hand on his face, just as Mila had done, she told him something, but Mila couldn't understand, the picture was blurring. How does he know her? Sister. Is what El called Mila. How do they know each other?

Mila felt immediate regret as she withdrew her hand, like she saw something she shouldn't have. Her curiosity was one of her weakest traits. It ruined a lot of things for her, especially since not even thought was safe from her, and neither was this total stranger. She felt dirty. Sick. She began to withdraw, gripping her shoulder bag tightly and running from the room, not looking back.

August 17th

"Mila!" Maria yelled from the front door of their new home. "How many more boxes?" she leaned on the frame of the door, sweating in the August heat.

"Just three!" Mila yelled back from the back of the moving truck. She lifted one of the boxes labeled with her own name and jumped from the back of the truck. "Well, three boxes and all the furniture." she said as she approached her disappointed mother, who was now pressing her forehead dramatically to the door frame.

"How do you feel about sleeping on the floor tonight and getting take out?" Maria closed her eyes and sighed.

"Sounds like less work to me." Mila agreed she shook the neck of her t-shirt, causing air to circulate where it was getting the most sweaty. It was already getting dark and they were exhausted. Packing up their house and moving all within a month was hard work. After Nana had her stroke, Maria didn't feel comfortable living so far away

anymore, Nana had no one in town to take care of her, and this town was getting weird.

It was a new town though, that was exciting for Mila, the only disadvantage was starting at a new school. That was the part she hated most, like every kid, being the new kid sucked. I sucked majorly. She was starting her senior year at Hawkins High in two weeks and she was more than nervous about it. She had all of the normal teenage problems of starting school, but with the added twist of hiding the fact that she was once a government test subject. Yeah, it's a real conversation starter. Her tattoo is the first question anyone asks about, so she's stuck to a strict rule of long sleeves or a fat wrist cuff her mother got her with her family name engraved in the leather.

Her mother is a strong woman, but when it comes to her daughter's safety, she quickly becomes unhinged. Maria fought long and hard for her child to be released to her, from offering a large sum of money, to hiring someone willing to break her out of the lab, She tried everything. Mila still doesn't know what she had to do to get her out, but it's resulted in them to move more than once, that's for sure. Always moving, always on the run, never home. This move wasn't unusual to say the least, they had become experts at moving short notice; this was one of the first times they had been able to pack everything in the house, not just take the essentials.

"Let's at least get one mattress." Mila suggested, much to her mother's disappointment.

"Fine. One mattress and then I am done!" Maria exclaimed with a hint of humor in her voice. "Then let's go get dinner" she said as she wrapped an arm around her daughters broad shoulders.

September 2nd

"Masha!" Mila yelled from her room. "Have you seen my backpack?!" It was the first day of school and she was already off to a poor start.

"It's by the front door! I put it there for you after I packed your lunch!" Maria yelled back.

Mila's next obstacle was finding her acid-wash jean jacket, it was her favorite and met her dress code. She tucked her shirt into her high-waisted shorts and quickly tied her shoelaces. Her hair was out of control this morning, but that's what the humidity of the Midwest gave you. Unmanageable, crazy hair. Mila's natural wave was turning into ringlets on the nape of her neck.

"Have you seen my denim jacket?" She yelled next.

"It's on the couch, lets go!" Maria yelled back once again.

"Alright!" She yelled back, bursting from her room, Mila snatched up her jacket and backpack, and she was climbing into the passenger side of her moms Buick. It was the ultimate mom-mobile.

The school was definitely bigger than expected, the middle school was on the same campus as the high school, so at least the population seemed greater. After a hearty and unnecessary emotional goodbye from her mom, Mila got out of the car and walked alone into the building. Her first stop was the office to get her class schedule and locker assignment.

She was given a locker close to her first class, which the Principal walked her to, she was also given a map of the campus. Once the first bell sounded she was escorted, unnecessarily, to her first class. The introduction was getting old. She had been introduced to a new class so many times, she didn't even bother acting excited anymore, it was just a way of life.

Her first class was history, which was always nice first thing in the morning. Not. The Principal entered first, holding the door open for her to enter just as class was starting. What a joy, dramatically stopping the first moment of class to merely have her name given and to be told to take any available, open seat.

"Class!" The teacher called everyone to attention. "I would like to introduce you to a new student who will be joining us this year, please welcome Miss Milena Straight." Mila simply smiled with tight lips and gripped her backpack strap tightly. She scanned the faces of the class, they all looked either uninterested, or put out. She didn't care really, she just wanted to sit down.

She was about finished assessing her new class when her eyes drug over a face she knew, a face she knew too well, that she definitely shouldn't have. It was him, in the flesh, staring out the window like he couldn't be bothered by anything in the world. He was chewing on the bottom corner of his lip, seeming to be lost in thought.

She couldn't hide the surprise, she whipped her head back to him, and blushed, she looked like she was gawking. A girl in the front row probably notice which produced a giggle, Mila couldn't help but shoot her a dirty look.

"Miss Straight, you can take a seat, please." The teacher nodded encouragingly toward the empty desk available. It was diagonally behind him, and she had to walk right by, but Mila was no coward. There was nothing to be afraid of. She never met this guy in her life, sure she saw him in a place only she could access and saw him in the hospital, but she didn't actually know the guy. There was no way he even remembered her, for all she knew, she was merely a dream to him.

Holding her head up high, she strode down the front of class, down the aisle to her desk. She wanted to exude confidence, she was Mila-Freaking-Straight, a badass teen who woke up with a cowlick in her hair. Screw feeling insecure. What did she have to feel insecure about?

Her confident walk was legendary, until mister dreamboat turned his head and stared directly at her as she passed. His eyes grew dark and he looked at her with as much surprise as she herself felt. It felt like it was slow motion. This moment could not be any worse, if she had wondered before if he would recognize her, she was naively hopeful that it was just a coincidence. Maybe he didn't like Aerosmith and she happened to be wearing their shirt. She hoped it was that.

Sinking into her chair, Mila felt like she was melting, her mind raged as she tried to remember if she told him her name or not. She fought the urge to check if he was staring every five seconds, instead she relied on her peripherals, he only turned to look at her once. She was finally able to pay attention in the final thirty minutes of class, only to hear that the information she wasn't paying attention to would be on their assignment, which was to be turned in tomorrow.

As soon as the bell rang, she was on her feet and speed walking as quickly as possible to her locker. She didn't bother to see if Billy was looking at her again.

"Hey wait!" A female voice called after her. Mila turned and saw a young, thin girl hurrying after her. "Hang on a second" she called again as Mila recognized that she had not stopped moving after the girl had first called her attention.

"Hi! Sorry, I'm just-" Mila stopped and sighed. "I don't know what I'm doing, I'm Mila." she was more than flustered.

"I'm Marsha, nice to meet you." she extended a hand and smiled politely, Mila took her hand but immediately regretted it, she was too flustered to focus on controlling her powers.

I wonder what she's being so weird out about?... Maybe she's lonely. I wonder if she's-

Mila released Marsha's hand like it was fire. Marsha looked at her skeptically. "Are you ok?" she asked.

"Yes, I'm just exhausted." she lied. "We just moved."

"Oh wow! Where from?" Marsha took a step down the hallway.

"Indianapolis." Mila started walking again, but this time she took up walking next to Marsha, instead of away from her.

"What a change. I'm sure it's way cooler there. There's nothing to do here." she pouted.

"It's not so different, I didn't really do much there. I'm not a partier and I don't go out often, this town is definitely more my speed, I think." Mila left out the part where she also wasn't allowed to do much, all things considered.

"I would have a total freak out if I had to move from a big city to a small town." Marsha droned.

"Well, maybe we can go visit sometime, it's not that far." Mila smiled, making friends wasn't against the rules, thankfully.

"So, do you have a super hot city boy toy in Indianapolis?" She asked, Mila just laughed.

"Absolutely not. I have no time for that."

"Well, I saw someone checking you out as you were leaving!" Marsha teased.

"Not even!" Mila retorted.

"Even! Hey, I gotta run, but find me at lunch, kay?" Marsha waved as she turned to leave.

"Alright, I will!" Mila called after her, this was the easiest first day she's ever had.

Mila reached her locker and opened it to shoved her history book in and took her math book out. When she was finished she closed her locker and let out a squeak of surprise. Standing in front of her, was Billy. He was leaning casually on the lockers in front of her, his arm above his head and his right foot kicked casually in front of the other, he staring at her skeptically.

"Well, well, well." he purred. "If it isn't the girl of my dreams."

He definitely remembered.